

outside diameter of said cylindrical surface of said connecting head, a passage extending centrally through said metal pipe from said first end to said second end, portions of said passage within said connecting head defining an annular groove spaced from said first end, said assembly further comprising a unitarily formed sleeve washer having opposite first and second ends, a portion of said sleeve washer extending from said first end toward said second end thereof surrounding and closely engaging at least a portion of said cylindrical surface of said connecting head, and portions of said sleeve washer adjacent said second end thereof having a thick-walled cylindrical portion surrounding and closely engaging portions of said cylindrical body adjacent said connecting head.

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

Claims 5-14 remain in the application. Independent claim 5 is the only independent claim and has been amended slightly to provide a more clear frame of reference for the structural elements that were previously recited in claim 5. It is believed that the minor amendments to claim 5 do not raise new issues that would require further consideration or searching. Accordingly, it is believed that entry of this Amendment After Final Rejection is proper.

Claims 5, 6, 9 and 11-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious over the previously cited Takikawa et al. reference considered in view of the newly cited U.S. Patent No. 5,058,935 to Eidsmore. The Examiner specifically acknowledges that the Takikawa et al. reference "fails to disclose that the washer surrounds at least a portion of the cylindrical surface" of the connecting head of the pipe.